

Applauds Effort to Bring Together People of Different Faiths

November 16, 2009

PHILADELPHIA, PA – Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) served as the featured speaker Sunday at the Philadelphia Dialogue Forum's (PDF's) Sixth Annual Friendship and Dialogue Dinner. A crowd of more than 150 attended the event hosted at the Hilton Philadelphia by PDF, which has the primary goal of building understanding, acceptance and trust amongst communities by promoting dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims. The group's members believe all faith groups share a common inner core and, through dialogue, common grounds can be discovered.

The Congressman spoke about core principles that can unite members of various religions, and about the importance of community leaders encouraging an open and honest dialogue between members of different faiths.

"I learned working in President Clinton's White House that differences between seemingly incompatible groups can be set aside for the sake of the common good, but we must be willing to engage and talk to one another," said Congressman Sestak. "I praise the efforts of the Philadelphia Dialogue Forum to bring people of different faiths together by recognizing that we often share the same principles and values, such as justice, charity and compassion. This organization sets a wonderful example for others to follow of an effort to foster true acceptance and understanding of people with different backgrounds and beliefs."

PDF is a non-profit organization founded by the Turkish-American Muslims of Philadelphia in 2003 and governed by leaders from academic, industrial and religious institutions. Its president, Dr. Mustafa Koksak, presented Congressman Sestak with a decorative Turkish plate in honor of his appearance.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, the Congressman was the first Director of Deep Blue, the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the Global War on Terrorism. He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Congressman Sestak is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.

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